

Mr. *Whitefield's*
CHATECHISE.

BEING AN
EXPLANATION
OF THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
METHODISTS.

By EBENEZER HEWLETT.

In a Letter to Mr. SEAGRAVE.

L O N D O N,
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Introduction.

MAny who would be thought Teachers of others, have need themselves to be taught the first Principles of Religion, this I take to be the Case of Mr. *Whitefield* and all the *Calvinists*; for the first Principle in Religion, is That God will reward every one according to their Works; without the Beliet of this, there can be no Religion at all, and yet this, tho' 'tis the first Principle and Foundation of all Religion, is utterly denied by these *Methodise Calvinists*, as I have proved by these following Lines; this is the only Cause of their Separation from the *Church of England*. I heard Mr. *Whitefield* on *Dowgate-Hill*, May 1. 1739. a few Days after I visited him at his Lodgings; I desired, that as I had heard him Preach, he would be so good as to dispute with me in private about these Doctrines, Of Election, Of the Trinity, and of Satisfaction: He reply'd,

These Doctrines don't concern the Glory of God nor the good of Mens Souls. No, says I, Is it not of concern to know God, whether he is a respecter of Persons or no? Our Articles, says he, do treat of that matter, but I have no Time now. Sir, said I, Here is three Books of my own Writing, which relates to these Doctrines, if you please to read them, I will call again when you please to appoint a time. I have no time, says he, to Read, Write or to Dispute.

Here *Note*, That these Doctrines are to be believed without Examination, right or wrong.

Again *Note*, That tho' these Doctrines do not concern the Glory of God, nor the good of Mens Souls, yet they are by these Men constantly preach'd up, as is manifest by the following Lines.

Again *Note*, That they of this Cast, who pretend to glorify God, and to do good to Mens Souls; they only pretend to prove, that God has power to save them by an irresistible Power, this is all the Glory they bring to God, and all the good they do to Mens Souls, which is prov'd to be none at all in the following Lines; as for the displaying the Goodness and Mercy of God, this is what they don't concern themselves about, unless 'tis to a few of their own Cast, independent of good Works, this I think is evident from all their Preaching and Printing. Thus Mr. *Whitefield*, in his Answer to the Bishop of London, P. 25. says, *Good Works are the Fruit and Effect, or Consequence, of Justification, and not the Cause of it.* And P. 8. 9.

24. he

I N T R O D U C T I O N. V

24. he teaches the same Doctrine, that is, that Men are not the more justified for the sake of good Works, they are justified whilst they are wicked; this Doctrine carries no Motives in it to Virtue, and consequently can produce no real Reformation; such Teachers has need themselves to be taught the first Principles of Religion; namely, That good Works are the Cause of Justification, and not the Effect of it the meanest Capacity can inform Mr. *Whitefield*, that none can be justified without good Works. If when a Man is acquitted before a Judge, it should be reported, that the Judges thus acquitting him, was the Cause of this Man's Innocency, or of his not being guilty, this would be just such Nonsense as Mr. *Whitefield's* Doctrine is, but this is more particularly consider'd in these following Lines, and in my late answer to Mr. *John Gill*. I beg you who please to read these Lines, to excuse the small Faults in it, because I could get none to correct it.

Mr. *Whitefield's*

INTRODUCTION

... he teaches the true Doctrine, that is, that
Men are not the more improved for the sake of
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Religion; namely, that good Works are the
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the inward Capacity can inform Mr. W. that
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be just such a Statement as Mr. W. makes.
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sidered in these following Lines, and in my late
answer to Mr. J. G. I beg you who please
to read these Lines, to excuse the small faults
in it, should I could get more to correct it.

Mr. W. Dieckhoff's



Mr. *Whitefield's*
Chatechise, &c.

S I R,



Understand that you have pleas'd the *Methodists*, by your Answer to Dr. Trapp, you having received Mr. *Whitefield's* Thanks for the same.

You suppose Mr. *Whitefield* and the *Methodists* to be Followers of the *Calvinists*, and the old Divines of the *Church of England*. Pag. 27. one of which Principles you mention'd Pag. 29. No Righteousness can avail us but Christ's whole Righteousness, set to us instead of our filthy Rags; you tell us in P. 28. what you mean by this whole Righteousness of Christ, viz. His active and passive Obedience, this is what you call, the Mystery of the Gospel, P. 29. This may I think be call'd a Mystery, for Christ's Obedience to be accounted ours. I would, in the Fear of God, desire you to answer these following Questions.

A 2

First,

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First, If Christ's active and passive Obedience is set to us, and accounted ours, and our good Works accounted filthy Rags, what Encouragement has any to do good Works, for Christ's Obedience, if reckoned to us, will make us perfect, without our own filthy Rags.

Secondly, Do you not hereby suppose, God to be either deficient in Knowledge or Justice, to account that to be, which is not nor can be, for his Obedience can never be ours in any Sense; nor accounted so, by any Being who is perfect in Knowledge and Justice.

Thirdly, Don't you and the *Methodists* contradict the plain Word of God, Rom. 2. 13. *For not the Hearers of the Law are just before God, but the Doers of the Law shall be justified.* Here we find that notwithstanding Christ's Obedience, yet our Obedience, so filthy or ragged as you count them, must be the matter of our Justification; and not a Word in all the Bible of his Obedience being ours; according to your Notions, we must expect to receive according to Christ's Obedience; but according to Scripture, every one must expect to receive according to their Deeds done in the Body, whether they are Good or Evil: Don't you evidently contradict the Word of God in almost every Page of it?

Fourthly, Do you not prevent the good Use of all Admonitions to Vertue? Which are, according to you, but filthy Rags, but according to Scripture, is of great Price in the Sight of God.

Fifthly, How can you justify, that this your Error do not produce Antinomianism? Can any

be under a Law, if Christ's Obedience must be recon'd ours; what signifies a Law over such whose best Actions are filthy Rags, that is worse than nothing.

Sixthly, Is not this your Notion, the Cause why the *Methodists*, and those Dissenters you call Free Grace ones, Page 10. do frequently tell their People, that they must not expect to be saved by their own good Works, or for the sake of them; notwithstanding God himself tells us, *Gen. 4. 7.* That Acceptance with him is for the sake of good Works, or well doing, which is the same. This their Notion, tho' contrary to the Word of God, is the common Doctrine of the *Methodists*, and those you call Free Grace Preachers amongst the Dissenters; they cite a few Texts, under Pretence that they have Authority from Scripture for this their Notion, which Texts I shall carefully examine, *Ephes. 2. 8, 9.* *By Grace ye are saved, through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God. Not of Works lest any Man should boast.* And *Tit. 3. 5.* Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, *2 Tim. 1. 9.* *Who hath saved us and called us, with an holy Calling, not according to our Works.* These are the Texts commonly urged in Defence of their unreasonable Notion of good Works, being like filthy Rags, as of no real Use; with the bare sound of these Words, they amuse the unthinking Part of Mankind, they will not give themselves leasure and consideration enough to examin, whether it is not contrary to the Apostle's Argument in those Texts as well as to all the rest of the Bible,

every one of these Texts speaks of being saved from Darkness by the light of the Gospel and 'tis manifest to every impartial eye, that 'tis not meant, they were accepted of God without regard to good Works; it can be nothing else but strong Prejudice, that can cause 'em to make no distinction, between our being sav'd from darkness, by the light of the Gospel: or being sav'd from the wrath of God by our improving the Gospel light: just as bad as it would be to affirm, that because the Israelites were sav'd, from the Philistians and others; that therefore God at that time sav'd them from the torments of Hell. Such Who deceive themselves in these plain things, are unfit to teach others, til they are better inform'd themselves. 7th Is not this your notion as above mention'd, the cause of your great mistake about the operation of the Holy Ghost. P. 23. you there speak of the working of the Holy Ghost on mens minds, its first workings, his renewals, and independant efficacy, independant of a good conscience, this you call regeneration. P. 24. your meaning I take to be this, the Spirit of God works effectual regeneration on mens minds independant of their own actions, at its first working: Your mistake I take to be this, you take conviction to be conversion: this is a mistake of the greatest importance. Conviction must be before conversion; the former is a being made sensible of our duty, the Latter is our COMPLIANCE to perform what we know to be our duty.

All knows this first workings of God's Spirit on their minds, But all dont COMPLY with his

his invitation, and therefore all are not regenerated.

8 th. Is not this murdering mens SOULS by thousands? to make them believe that they are regenerated? when at the same time they are only convinc'd of their sin.

Regeneration is a work of Man, by the HELP of God's Spirit, and not independent efficacy. Convictions indeed are sometimes wrought independant, thus St. Paul was convinc'd independant of his own choice, but it was his compliance with the will of God, that was conversion: Pharah was convinc'd as well as St. Paul, but was not regenerated, that is he never willingly comply'd With his known duty which ALONE is regeneration.

9. th. Are not Men blam'd, and damn'd because they are not converted; how then can your notion of independant regeneration be true? will God condemn Men for that which must be done independant of any act of theirs.

10 th. How can you suppose that this your notion can obviate Deism P. 29. Whereas it is the root and foundation of Deism, for the Bible abounds with promises and threatenings, in order to prevail upon Men to be converted, to be born again, to set our Affections on things above, and yet according to your notions all these textes must stand for nothing: and then what is become of the Authority of the Bible.

11 th. What would you have the ministers of the Church of England do, if they find their Articles contrary to Scripture? must they therefore

therefore imbrace 'em ? or is it not their duty to preach and write against 'em is not this the way to get rid of them in time.

12 th. What account will you give at the Last, when it will be made appear, that you taught Men to depend upon Christ's obedience and not their own, for their acceptance, to the ruin perhaps of thousands, you suppose Mens Justification and Sanctification without industry of the creature the one by the merits of Christ, the other by the independant efficacy of the Holy Ghost ? dont this naturally prepare People for idleness ? is it not better to teach Men as our Saviour and his Apostles did, to strive, to Fight, to keep themselves in the love of God, that the righteous shall scarcely be sav'd this is better and truer doctrine than yours, I take it your notions do make Men drunk, with a powerful conceit that they are Favorites of God independant of good works, this is what some call the marrow of the gospel the only comfort of a Christian, they suppose that they can never perrish, only because they are fired with a strong conceit, that no Man who is not of their cast, can be a favorite of Heaven : you speaks of them as they who can no more see than a Man born blind, as tho' you have a more decerning Eye than any body else, because you think you can see God to be the Author of sin, as I shall prove,

I observe first according to you, they who are not born again, can no more help it, than a Man born blind can give himself sight.

Again

Again I observe, you ought not to perswade any Man to be born again, you had as good according to your own notions, to advise the TREES of the field to speak and go.

Again if you seek God FOR the new NATURE, or to be Born again: you do for ought you know, ask such things as he will not bestow upon you, you cannot Pray in faith, for you own that God don't give the New Birth to all Mankind, and that it was Determin'd from eternity who should have it and who not; and how do you know that you are one of these eternally pick'd out persons, WITHOUT an immediate revelation from God: I don't question but that you believe God Ordain'd you should be born Again, but this is not the Faith of the Gospel: Gospel Faith is to believe what is therein contain'd, But for a Man to believe, that the greatest part of Mankind, were Eternally design'd for DAMNATION: and that he himself was Eternally appointed to Salvation, I say this is not Faith but Presumption.

Again as I have prov'd your Faith FALSE and Presumptious, so I think your sort of Repentance is not of the Right Stamp; You talk of two sorts of Repentance the one legal the other evangelical, the latter you suppose to be something above nature P. 17 either you cannot or else you will not, tell us what you mean by unnatural Repentance or above nature, this you keep as a secret amongst yourselves, 'tis not sorrow for sin and a turning from

from it, no this is natural, this can be explain'd, and therefore it cannot be your evangelical unnatural Repentance, this I suppose is what you call legal Repentance. I will tel you what I take to be your mysterious Repentance, viz A sorrow that they cannot always maintain their Presumptuous confidence which they call Faith, they often complain of the Frailty of Nature, brought on them by Adams transgression: So that to speak Plain, 'tis Adam's sin and not their own, which they are sorry for, as for their own sins; they believe Christ have paid for them: But the Unhappy consequence of our first Parents transgression, they suppose does remain untaken away, this they take to be the cause, why their Faith is so seldom strong enough firmly to believe that God Eternally, and Unconditionally ELEC-TED them.

Again I can't think these Predestinarians love to God is of the right kind: For they believe him to be a Partial Being, and tho' they may sometimes imagin him Partial in their favour, and may love him as such; but we ought to love God because of his Perfections, and not because of his Partiality, which is an imperfection. Thus I think these methodists to be wrong in respect to their Faith, Repentance, and love to God, Which will more fuller appear by and by.

A DISPUTE

BETWEEN

the Rev. Mr
SEGRAVE

and EBENEZER HEWLETT

ABOUT Mr WHITEFIELD'S DOCTRINE

AT BLACKWEL'S COFFE HOUSE,

September 8. 1739

SEGRAVE have you Well consider'd what
I have Wrote, concerning Mr Whitefield and
the Bishop of London.

Hewlett yes Sir.

S. and what do you think of that contro-
versy.

H. Sir I can't say but that I differ from
you in many things.

S you know that one Part of the contro-
versy is whether the Ministers of the Church
of England, have not gon from their Articles.

H.

H Sir I dont concern my self about that Part of the controvercy, I have only consider'd whether your doctrine be agreeable to Scripture and Reason.

S don't you believe the fore-knowledg of God.

H. yes Sir but will that Justifie your Doctrine, of unconditional Election and Reprobation.

S Whatsoever God Fore-knows must most certainly come to Pass.

H I take it that action don't depend upon Fore-knowledg, that is, things do not come to Pass because God foresaw it: but he Fore-sees things because they will so come to Pass, Sir do you believe Men to be free Agents.

S. yes

H If so then it is impossible that God should absolutely determin all things, because that would Prevent Mens being Free; Men must have a power to do good or evil, or else they cannot be brought to Judgement, and if they have such a power then God did not absolutely decree what should be their actions.

S I believe God from eternity absolutely determined all things whatsoever comes to Pass.

H. Sin comes to Pass, and so according to you God is the Author of sin.

S. No it is not sin in him but it is sin in the Creature.

H. But Sir if God did thus decree all actions, in such a manner as that the Creature could not do otherwise than they do, then
is

is God's Decree the only Cause of all Sin ? And by the same Rule, they who do good are forc'd to it. S. No, they are not forc'd to do good, but God makes them willing in the Day of his Power, so willing as that they cannot be otherwise than willing, and then they need not be forc'd, when they are thus made willing, they cannot do otherwise.

H. What difference is there between cannot help it, and cannot do otherwise ? Sure none at all. Again, If Men are thus irresistably made willing, then there can be no Self-denial at all ; for a Man to deny himself must be to act contrary to his own Will : They who are born again, you say, are by God made so willing to do Good, that they cannot do otherwise ; and before the New Birth you say none denies themselves at all, and by the same Rule, there is no such thing as any Self-denial at all, either before, at, or after the New Birth, the New Birth being by you supposed to be wrought independent of the Creature's Actions, as before observed. You know, Sir, Our Saviour taught us to deny our selves ; and therefore I think these your Notions are both false and vile ; because you endeavour to take away the Valuableness of Good Works, which according to our Lord and his Apostles, are the matter of our Justification and Salvation.

S. Can we merit Salvation by our good Works ?

H. No, Any more than if a Man should offer a hundred Pounds for every Foot of Ground

his Servant should dig in his Garden, he cannot be said to merit this Money, yet if he dig none, he will have nothing; so eternal Life is not according to but infinitely above our Deserts.

S. Good Works, the Scripture calls our own Righteousness, which some go about to establish, because they are ignorant of the Righteousness of God, *Rom. 10 3.*

H. Sir, Good Works, cannot be there call'd their own Righteousness, because these People did not go about to establish good Works, but their own Inventions, or the Traditions of Men, as our Saviour evidently proves; so that their own Righteousness, was their following the Inventions of Men, and God's Righteousness was good Works, or a inward rectitude of Mind which he commanded, or by their own Righteousness, may be meant their resting in the bare Observance of the Law, the external Part of it without having it written on their Hearts, but sure to say good Works were their own Righteousness, or that they went about to establish good Works, is manifestly to pervert the whole History given in the New Testament of the unconverted Jews; if this People went about to establish good Works, how came they to be such Enemies to Christ and his Followers, who manifestly endeavoured to establish good Works? and if to establish their own Righteousness, was not to establish good Works, then good Works were set in opposition to their own Righteousness, and so good Works
were

were God's Righteousness, in opposition to that of their own.

S. Mens best Works are imperfect, and a God of all spotless Purity cannot accept of any thing short of Perfection.

H. Our Lord tells us, *That where little is given little is required*; and therefore less Perfection is accepted from some than from others. we find God accepted *Cornelius* when he was not perfect, *Acts* 10. 4. Even before he was a Christian, and consequently it was not Faith that justified him but good Works: And God said to *Cain*, *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted*; and to suppose, that no imperfect Action can be acceptable to him, that is to say, he cannot accept of any, because none are without their Imperfections, even the Angels are charged with Holly; thus your Notion is a bane to Vertue, for who will be industrious to perform good Works, if they believe God cannot accept them; if this is the case, then 'tis as good to be wicked as vertuous, as far as I can see, the humble submission of a Child, is as acceptable to the Parent, as the Industry of one of riper Years; Suppose you should say, such a Man will not accept of or regard any thing his Children does, because they cannot do their Works so perfect as he himself; such a Man would be a Monster in human Nature, so your Notion tends to darken God's Perfections. The sum of all your Arguments I take to be this, Good Works cannot forward, nor bad Works hinder Mens Salvation, the which whosoever be-
lieves

lieves, will do no more good Works than will serve their present Purpose.

S. Our Doctrine is a comfortable Doctrine.

H. I acknowledge 'tis very pleasant to believe our eternal Happiness is made sure without any Act of ours, joyful News to the vilest of Sinners, all the World one would think will follow you, but not all the Church.

Some do suppose that good Works are not so bad in the Sight of God, as to be esteemed of as filthy Rags, but that he will not accept them without Christ merit its Acceptance, as *Mr. Hallet*, and many others; I think these only differ in Words from you, for if good Works can't be accepted without something to render them so, then I think they may be called Filthy Rags.

Others suppose that none can have Christ's Righteousness imputed to them, without they bring forth good Works, these I think are as inconsistent as the former, because they suppose 'tis Christ's Righteousness that must cover over their good Works, which is the same as to say, their good Works are of no use to their Acceptance; these are not willing to render good Works wholly useless, because that is to fly in the face of God's Word; yet the Sense I think is the same. As for that Text, *Isa. 64. 6.* where the Word Filthy Rags is used, 'tis evident, that 'tis bad Works that is there called Filthy Rags; do you therefore mean, that Christ's whole Righteousness must be set to us instead of our bad Works.

I desire an Answer.

F I N I S.

